

GOURMET

AUSTRALIAN

TRAVELLER

JUNE 1997

\$ 5 . 9 5*
NZ\$9.20
(incl GST)

Tetsuya
exclusive
antipasto
fruits of winter

HIMALAYAS
SECRET ITALY
SA to WA

Individual baked
lemon cheesecake



IN AN ERA when the coffee bean is king and the hiss of the espresso machine is heard in cafes across the country, you have to wonder whatever happened to all the tea drinkers.

Two people who are intent on leading a revival in tea's fortunes are Jan O'Connor and Maryanne Shearer, with the establishment of Tea Too in Melbourne's Fitzroy. Step inside the doors of their shop and you'll be instantly seduced by over 200 teas from around the world: five different darjeelings and an orange pekoe from India, keemun rose, yunnan, gunpowder green, oolong and the classic lapsang souchong from China, along with Taiwanese formosan, New Guinea kindeng, Japanese organic

sencha and a selection from Indonesia, Turkey and Australia.

A shared cup of coconut tea was the beginning of the friendship between these two, which was to lead to the establishment of Tea Too. A stylish lifestyle-homewares store was the initial business idea and an overseas trip was undertaken to source products. However, it was the teas they encountered which appealed and they soon adapted their plans.

Attention to detail is apparent at Tea Too, from the look of the shop through to the packaging. There are walls papered with Chinese newspapers, herbalists' boxes filled with different teas and knockout window displays. American take-out boxes are one of the main packaging concepts,



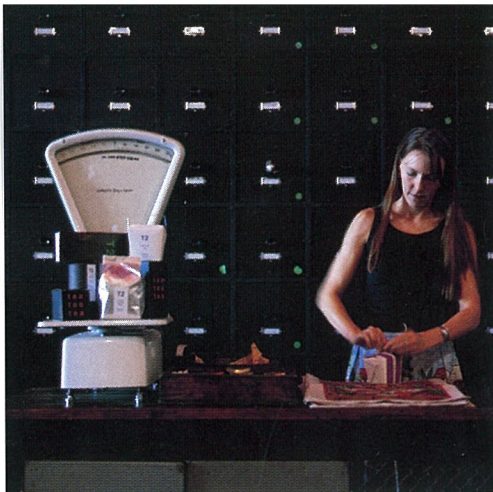
PALATE TEASERS

ONE OF OUR MOST POPULAR BEVERAGES DOES NOT ALWAYS GET THE RECOGNITION IT DESERVES



TEXT BY ALLAN CAMPION
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SIMON GRIFFITHS

Top, tea infusers. Left, the interior of Tea Too resembles a European dispensary



along with classy-looking black tubes and cubes with distinctive orange writing.

One of the great things about a specialised shop of this kind is the opportunity to choose a brew that suits you. An array of tea samples allows you to appreciate the diverse flavours and aromas – some people even nibble the leaves. Tastings of various teas are also offered throughout the day for more conventional sampling. A couple of very special teas you must look for include tiny hand-rolled balls known as Buddha's tears, which unravel in boiling water, releasing their delicious jasmine flavour. Japanese green tea with quince is superb.

If that's not enough, there's a huge array of exotic teas, such as imperial spice and the impressively named arctic fire, while herbal and fruit infusions incorporate everything from elder flowers, licorice root and rose hips to vanilla, cinnamon and lemon with peel. Tea Too is also the sole supplier in Australia of the Husk organic range from New York. There

is an entire wall of infusers and strainers to suit every need, as well as teapots, tea glasses and cups.

A recent doubling in floor space of the Fitzroy shop has allowed them to begin including the homeware products they love so much. There are also plans to open Tea Too shops in other cities across Australia in the not-too-distant future.

This plethora of tea shops and their range of delicious brews should see a renewed interest in enjoying and serving good tea – alongside good coffee, of course.

Tea Too, 340 Brunswick St, Fitzroy, Melbourne, phone (03) 9417 3722, open Mon-Tue 11-6, Wed 10-6, Thu 10-7, Fri 10-8, Sat 10-7 and Sun 10-6. Tea Too, 89a Fitzroy St, Melbourne, phone (03) 9534 6266, open Mon-Wed 12-7, Thu 11-8, Fri 11-9, Sat 11-8 and Sun 11-7. Quality teas can also be obtained by mail order from The India Tea Company, PO Box 93, Guildford, WA, 6055, phone (09) 377 0098, fax (09) 377 2607. 

Do business over lunch.

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